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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

Central Intelligence Bulletin

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27 July 1970

State Department review completed

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Approved For Release 2003/08/26 : CIA-RDP79T00975A016800020001-3

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No. 0178/70
27 July 1970

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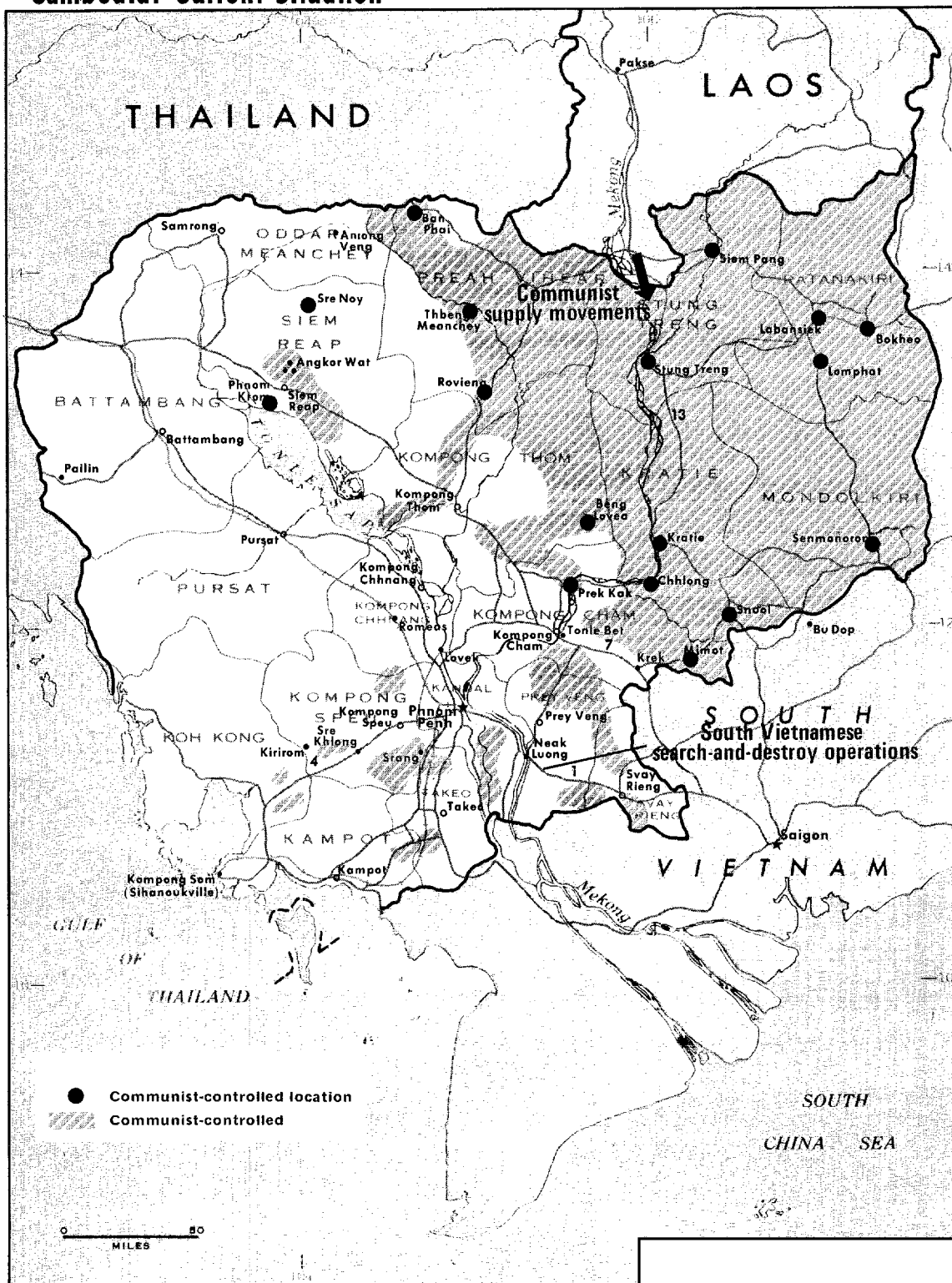
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Cambodia: Current Situation



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Cambodia: The Communists continue to concentrate on small-scale attacks against isolated government positions and lines of communications.

A South Vietnamese task force entered Cambodia on 26 July on a search-and-destroy mission along Route 1 but has made only light contact with the enemy.

US Embassy officers who visited Kompong Som on 25 July report that the seaport is quiet. Government officials have taken few security precautions despite the city's strategic importance, claiming that the nearest Communist elements are 60 miles down the coast. Economic activity, particularly tourism, is down, but the oil refinery in Kompong Som is still producing enough to meet current needs.

Meanwhile, to the north the Communists are having some success proselytizing the Cambodian population. In Stung Treng Province, the North Vietnamese are taking pains to avoid antagonizing the local villagers. The Communists are helping villagers plant rice, and in Kratie Province the Communist district chief in Snoul has gained some popularity by helping townspeople rebuild homes destroyed by US forces during the fighting. Cambodian Communist cadres are moving through the countryside counting heads and propagandizing villagers.

Supplies from Laos

25X1 [redacted] Communist forces in Cambodia are receiving supplies purchased for them in southern Laos via the Route 13/Mekong River transportation corridor. The source of these supplies appears to be Pakse, the major town and military headquarters for southern Laos. North Vietnamese Army representatives receive the supply shipments from Laotian intermediaries near the Cambodian border and forward them by boat to Stung Treng. [redacted]

25X1 [redacted] three boatloads of supplies have

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reached Stung Treng daily since late last month in this fashion. It is unlikely that such a supply operation could be undertaken without the tacit cooperation of at least some Laotian officials.

Moving On

Under pressure from the government, Sihanouk's mother, Queen Kossamak, has finally vacated the royal palace. The move is another step toward the abolishment of the monarchy, to which the Lon Nol government is all but committed. The monarchy has considerable potential for serving as a rallying point for the Cambodian people--particularly in the tradition-oriented rural areas--but Lon Nol has been under pressure from "progressive" elements to declare Cambodia a republic. [REDACTED]

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South Vietnam: President Thieu has further developed the country's public position on a cease-fire, apparently to demonstrate again that Saigon is more flexible and forthcoming than Hanoi.

In a meeting with Saigon newspaper publishers on 23 July, Thieu said that South Vietnam now is willing to accept an immediate cease-fire that could be followed by negotiations to reach a political settlement. This is the first time that he has publicly suggested a cease-fire in which both sides would "stand still wherever they are." Formerly he had insisted that any cease-fire must be a part of an over-all peace settlement that would have to be negotiated before the cease-fire could take effect.

Thieu said certain conditions must be met. Specifically, the Communists would have to stop their infiltration and terrorism and the cease-fire would have to be internationally supervised, in themselves major points for negotiation. Earlier, in a speech to the National Assembly on 6 October 1969, Thieu had put greater stress on the need to negotiate first on the conditions and procedures for any cease-fire. This time he spelled out his ideas more fully and used more forthcoming language.

In view of the Communists' highly developed ability to conduct secret military, terrorist, and political operations, such a "stand-still" cease-fire would entail high risks for the government. Thieu is probably confident, however, that the Communists will reject his latest proposal out-of-hand as they did his proposal of a year ago for elections. He reportedly advised the publishers that he doubted the Communists would accept such a cease-fire because "they hardly have any place to stay." This comment also reflects his confidence that the government is in a relatively strong position in much of the countryside, despite a local Communist resurgence in some provinces.

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Thieu presumably made his statement at this time because of renewed interest in the Paris talks occasioned by Ambassador Bruce's impending arrival there. He probably has little enthusiasm for any real movement in the Paris talks that could handcuff South Vietnam's defenses against the Communists and that would put the present controlling political apparatus up for grabs. His real attitudes are probably much better reflected in his periodic free-swinging attacks on neutralists and advocates of coalition government in South Vietnam. [REDACTED]

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USSR-Peru: Moscow has renewed its airlift to Peru.

Two AN-12s left the USSR on 25 July shortly after the Soviet Embassy announced that Soviet search aircraft had sighted a life raft with three persons who may have been from the AN-22 that went down over the Labrador Sea on 18 July.

The one-week pause in flights that followed the loss of the AN-22 has complicated the Soviet relief effort, which is less than one-quarter complete. The Soviet ambassador to Peru has commented that the lost aircraft was carrying one of the two mobile hospitals Moscow is supplying and he estimated that it would take about a month to replace it. This would interfere with Soviet aid plans because many of the medical personnel already sent to Peru cannot work in the affected areas without the hospital.

The loss of the AN-22 is the latest of several mishaps that have delayed the Soviet relief effort and robbed it of much of its planned impact. The Peruvian press has reported every delay in expected arrivals, usually noting that Soviet Embassy sources were unable to explain the delays. Difficulties in carrying out the Soviet aid plan coupled with the initial tardiness of the Soviet response to the Peruvian disaster have greatly reduced the political gains for which Moscow had hoped.

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[Jordan: The Jordanian Government accepted the US peace proposal last night, but may have refused to force the fedayeen within the country to adhere to a cease-fire.

After a day-long cabinet meeting, in which pro-fedayeen cabinet ministers reportedly held out for exclusion of the fedayeen from any cease-fire, Foreign Minister Rifai announced that the decision was "unanimous, positive, and consistent with the reply of the United Arab Republic." This would presumably entail acceptance of a cease-fire along the Israeli border.

An attempt to block off fedayeen cross-border activity, however, would meet with stubborn fedayeen resistance and could re-ignite the near-civil war that raged for a week in early June. The commando newspaper Fatah yesterday published a text of an earlier US plan, which it claimed to be the current version. The paper declared that "the masses" will refuse to accept "this charter of slavery except over the dead body of the last Arab fighter," and warned that "the banner of the revolution will wave until it flies over every inch of Palestine."

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NOTE

Laos: The military situation remained essentially unchanged over the weekend. Reports predicting enemy attacks on key points in extreme southern Laos before the end of the month are on the increase, but so far no major action has developed. In the central panhandle, the continuing government effort to harass enemy supply movements on Route 23 has provoked more battalion-sized clashes between irregular forces and the Communists. In the north, heavy rains are curtailing air and ground activity. On the political front, Vientiane is still awaiting the arrival of Pathet Lao leader Souphanouvong's envoy, who is expected to shed some light on the Communist attitude toward negotiations between the Lao factions.

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